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DE RUEHRB #1299 1871621
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 061621Z JUL 06
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4207
INFO RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 4072
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RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 8961
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA 1878
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UNCLAS RABAT 001299

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/MAG

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PGOV PREL MO
SUBJECT: ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR TO MOROCCO EXPLAINS POSITION
ON IRAQ

¶1. This message is sensitive but unclassified. Please
protect accordingly.

¶2. (SBU) Ambassador July 5 received Romanian Ambassador to
Morocco Vasile Popovici, who had requested an urgent meeting
to discuss Romania's position on its troops in Iraq.
Reaffirming Romania's commitment to the coalition in Iraq,
Popovici explained that the Romanian Supreme Council for
National Defense voted June 30 to reject the proposal
announced by Prime Minister Calin Tariceanu and Defense
Minister Teodor Atanasiu to withdraw Romanian troops by the
end of the year. Popovici argued that the 9-2 vote to reject
the proposal demonstrated important support for the Romanian
President, and for the US, with only the Prime Minister and
Ministry of Defense supporting the proposal.

¶3. (SBU) Explaining that troop involvement in Iraq is an
emotional issue for Romania, Popovici said that the Prime
Minister's announcement of this proposal was politically
motivated. Approximately 65 percent of Romanians are against
troop involvement in Iraq, which certainly was one of the
considerations for the Prime Minister's decision. Minister
of Defense Atanasiu sent a telegram to troops in Iraq
"announcing" the pullout, which clearly violated Romanian law
and was a "slap in the face" to the President, he said.
Popovici added that several high level government officials,
including the Foreign Minister Mihai Razvan and himself,
offered to submit their resignations if the "announcement"
was not corrected immediately.

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